

THE  
English Spira :  
BEING  
A Fearful EXAMPLE  
OF A  
APOSTATE

Who had been a Minister many Years, and then Apostatized  
from his Religion, and lived in great Sin, till  
1725 - 1726.

GIVING  
An Account of his Life, and Devout Conduct  
before, and by several Ministers and others of his Church.  
TOGETHER  
With his Apology, and Private Writings by himself.

Printed by W. B. Hall, at the Sign of the Crown, in  
St. Pauls Church-yard, 1727.

THE  
English Spira :

A Tenth Example

APOSTAT

TO THE  
READER.

**T**HAT which hath prevailed with us to publish this Treatise, is, that we might give those many who have desired it, and all that shall vouchsafe to read it, an impartial Account of what hath come to our knowledge concerning the Dreadful Horror of Conscience, and Deplorable End of Mr. John Child: In his Youthful days, a zealous Professor of Religion; in his Riper years, a Backslider from God, under pretence of Change of his Opinion: A Neglector of Publick Worship, not only in the way he had formerly profess'd, but in that also which of late years, in his Discourses and Arguments, he preferred before the other.

Under the Specious shew of promoting a more full and firm Union amongst all good Protestants; a great Calumniator of his Brethren, publicly charging many of them in general, as guilty of such Crimes and Blasphemies, as his own Knowledge and Dictates of Conscience, at the season when he did it, could and did testify they were clear of.

What prompted him hereunto, (besides the Hypocrisie, Pride, and Malice of his own heart) we certainly know not; but have some ground to suspect, when he was about this evil work which caused his downfall, he conversed with some persons, who rather promoted than cautioned him against it.

Under his Temptation, we fear, he did not consider that anciently-approved, useful, and necessary Caution, which the Apostle

## To the READER.

mentions, Be not deceived, evil communication corrupts good manners.

After he was once thoroughly awakened with the sense of his Sin, he fell under those Horrors of Conscience, which have not been parallel'd in any other that we have heard of, since the Case of Francis Spira, being so dreadful, permanent, and preatious over him, as to resist all Friendly Endeavours, used to appease his grief; which after several months abiding in the highest extremity, at length tempted and prevailed with him, by his own hands to end his miserable Life.

Upon this occasion we have also given some brief Hints of the Nature and Office of Conscience, and the Obligations we are under to it. All which we recommend to the Readers serious consideration, with our fervent Prayers to God, that what we have herein done, may succeed to his and our own Souls advantage, and peace of Conscience, both here and hereafter.

It may be in many respects useful to take notice that the Pamphlet which was Written and Published by Mr. John Child, and which, with respect to the bitter Reflections and Calumnies therein cast upon his Brethren, did afterwards fill him with so great Horror of Soul, as to destroy himself, bore the Title of as charitable an Argument, as could be undertaken by the best of Christians.

## For a more full and firm Union amongst all good Protestants.

But though in this Title his Words were (as the Psalmist speaks) softer than oyl, yet were they drawn swords. He put forth his hand against such as were at peace with him; his Equals, his Acquaintance, who had walked with him to the House of God in company. The sense whereof when he was awakened to see and feel in his own Conscience, the heinousness of his Crime in slandering his Brethren, did so terrifie him, that it could



## TO the READER.

was so distressed (either by his Relations, or any of those many of his Brethren whom he had offended, who came to visit him, and endeavoured to pour Balm into, bind up, and heal his deep wounds) that at any time afterwards he enjoyed any peace in his Soul.

The principal inducement to publish a Narrative of this Man's Trouble of Spirit, and Miserable End, is to give an Impartial Account to many who desire to be truly informed thereof, what Confessions were had with him, what Papers on this Subject were left behind him, and that the whole may be a seasonable Caution to all who read them, to take heed how they do in any case whatsoever presume to sin against the clear Light, Knowledge, and Dictates of their own Conscience: for which end it is intended to say something briefly concerning the Nature and Office of Conscience, and that attendance which every man is to give to it.

But for the avoiding of all sinister Reflections on what is herein undertaken, the Publishers hereof do declare,

First, That they do not ascribe this Man's Miserable End to any Conscientious Change of Opinion in Matters of Religion or Worship, or to any Endeavour of his to propagate Union amongst Christians in a candid way, by proper Arguments; but they lay the stress of his Miscarriage where he fixed it himself, that is, upon his Backsliding from the Ways of God, forsaking that which was Good, doing that which he knew to be Evil; and upon his Hypocrisie, Pride of Spirit, Covetousness, and his unjustifiable Calumniating, Reproaching, Reviling, and Accusing many of his Brethren of such things as he knew they were not guilty of. All which he acknowledged in his own Papers, and frequently charges himself with.

Secondly, We are so far from Censuring any Attempts that have been made in a Christian manner for a more full and firm Union amongst all good Protestants, that we heartily wish we

## To the READER.

could see more Hearts (and such Hands as are fitly qualified for it) at work on this Subject: for blessed are the Peace-makers, and the Fruits of Righteousness are sown in peace of them that make peace.

Thirdly, To shew our good Will to such an Undertaking, we shall upon this occasion, after we have made some brief Reflections on the Nature and Office of Conscience, and finished the Narrative of this Man's Troubles, assume the Argument, and according to that measure of Faith and Knowledge which God hath given us, speak the Truth in Love, in order to the obtaining (if it may be upon a right Foundation) a better Understanding, and from thence a more full and firm Union among all who love the Lord Jesus in Sincerity.

REMARKS

# REMARKS

## UPON THE

# Nature and Office

## OF

# CONSCIENCE.

**H**ERE we have a recent and pregnant Instance of the powerful and perpetual prosecution of an offended and an awakened Conscience, the Horrors whereof were so dreadful and unappeasable, that all Attempts, either to divert the Thoughts to other Subjects, or apply the Mind to the receiving or using of mitigating or healing Remedies, were altogether ineffectual.

Herein we may also perceive, how the Terrors of such a Mind are aggravated beyond the rate of Natural Impressions, proportional to the help which Natural Light receives by Education, Conversation and Acquaintance with Divine Revelation.

The Philosophers, (whom we esteem Heathens) as being strangers to the Will of God revealed, and Covenant of Grace treated of in the Scriptures) from the dictates of Natural Light, comparison of Good and Evil, Moral Virtues and Vices, Tranquility and Perturbations of Mind, which ensued the reflection upon good and evil Actions, went very far in describing the proper Office of Conscience, and those Horrors which were the Consequents of Heinous Offences.

But this Man hath so much the more exceeded them all, by how much the Remedies properly applicable to a penitent sinner (through the Benefits of a Mediatour) were more known and opposed by him than by any of them.

They

They could, and did, write of an universal and immutable Law engraven on the Mind of Man, as that there was one eternal righteous God to be worshipped, and with respect as well to future as present Rewards and Punishments, was to be revered and feared, Parents to be honoured, our Neighbours not to be injured in their Persons or Properties, and that what we would not have done to us, that we should not do to another. That this Law was known to the generality of Mankind by its effects, and by natural anticipations and common notions of Good and Evil imprinted in Humane Nature.

And altho' by the introducing of intermixture of some Notions, as the Rule of discerning and judging the Morality of Actions, which are not proper and adequate Rules for the directing of Conscience to make a right Judgment, as our own good Intentions, other Mens Example or Doctrines, and the like, Conscience may be mis-guided, and from such Premises make wrong Conclusions, as it may also happen (through Ignorance) by a wrong application of the proper and adequate Rule, yet that Rule remains a fixt and permanent Faculty in the rational Soul, a connate Habit in the Practical Understanding; in such manner as that when the Mind and Memory are awakened and fitted up rightly to discern and apply that Rule to Actions past, it will be made evident, that it is above the power of any man to give himself or any other an absolute dispensation from this adequate Rule and Law of Conscience, which God hath created in our Hearts, as his Tribunal; and our neglect of this Rule, or suffering our Consciences to be mislead by any other, will (when the veil is taken off) be no excuse, but rather an aggravation, (at least if it proceeded from a voluntary Ignorance) that we did not according to the power of natural light remaining in us; by a right application of the proper Rule, discern, measure and judge our own Actions, whether they were morally good or evil.

These Philosophers discerned, and by unanswerable Arguments from Demonstrations, evinced, that God created all things in order and that therefore every created Being, together with, and in itself, (as the Psalmist also in the written Word of God declares) had its proper Law and Limit, without which that Order could not be considered, and that Humane Nature which was endued with a faculty of power of election to do or refuse, was under the inspection of God to be encouraged and assisted, rebuked, corrected or punished, as Men observed or acted contrary to that Law which was inscribed in their Natures.

Hence

Hence they affirmed, (even as by Divine Ordination) the Reward of Virtue to be in itself, and that it was therefore to be followed, as that which always carried with it, and left behind it a singular profit, also that whilst the Mind was quiet, as not being conscious of any crime, it would restrain and stop the Mouth of passions, and prevail to the silent bearing of whipping, cutting, torturing, &c.

*Iustum & tenacem propositi Orbem  
Non Civium ardor prava jubentium  
Non vultus instantis Tyranni  
Mente qualem solida : neque Ausper  
Dux iniqua turbidum Adhuc  
Nec fulminantia magna Jovis machina  
Si fractus illabatur Orbis,  
Impavidum seriemur ruinae.*

Horat.

The just man's judgment and resolved will,  
No fury popular injoyning ill,  
No urgent aspect of a Tyrant's face  
Doth shake, in seded Mind on solid base,  
Nor the tempestuous South-Winds, which command  
Rough *Adria's* Seas, nor *Jove's* great thundering hand,  
If Ruins overwhelm, and crackt World fall,  
Undaunted like he bears the shock of all.

But on the contrary, that a notorious wicked Conscience was like an Ulcer in the Body, and that none could ever impose upon a hot burning Conscience, or perswade, that such an one should not cry out, or not tare his hair, or not smite his breast, so much more violent is the sense of having done evil, than that of Fire and Sword.

*Exempto quocunque, malo committitur ipse  
Displicet Auctori ; prima est hoc alio quod se  
Judice, Nemo nocens absolvitur improba quoniam  
Gratia fallaci Fraterno cecidit amaro  
— car famula dicit*

Juven.

*Evassit putes quos dare conscia facti  
Mens habet atomatis & fudo verberare cadit  
Oculum quiescente animo tortore flagellum  
Nocte disquis suum gestare in pectore testem  
Perpetua excusat, nec multa timore cessat*

What e're thy ill example's done amiss,  
 Troubles th' Author, the first revenge is this:  
 Himself being Judge, his Guilt he can't discharge,  
 Tho' the brib'd Judge and Votes, set him at large.  
 How think'st thou then, that those escapes confin'd,  
 Accus'd of high Crimes by their conscious Mind,  
 'Stonish'd, trembling, tortur'd within they stand,  
 Severely punish'd by a secret Hand:  
 Both night and day he bears within his Breast,  
 Perpetual Anguish, at his Meals no rest.

Hence that vulgar saying, *Das penas quicumque expectat*: They can never be happy, who always live in suspicion and fear of Punishment: for that fear of punishment will haunt a person, that sins heinously against his Conscience, so long as it cannot be beyond contradiction proved and demonstrated, that there is no just God to avenge his Crime.

Thus far have the learned Philosophers and Poets proceeded upon the Principles of Natural Light, and common Experience, in the Description of Conscience, its Office and Effects, as not consisting in, and arising from a bare speculative knowledge of things, but in and from a practical knowledge of the rule applied to the particular Fact done, or to be done, wherein the Divine Authority of the Law-giver, the rectitude of that uniform and universal Law written in Humane Nature, the quality of the Action, and Intention of the Person, as known to God, and which might and ought to be known and considered by the Actor, with its consequents, are all comprehended.

Others by their conversation with Holy Scripture, improving this Natural Light, have, according to the Laws and Rules thereof, confirmed, and in their Discourses enlarged upon this subject, concerning the different qualities of Conscience performing aright, or neglecting its proper Office, in judging according to present understanding, of things morally good or evil, by that Divine Law or Will of God manifest in them, or made known to them, which is and ought to be applied thereunto, and observed as the proper and adequate Rule thereof.

2. 15. And these say that Conscience, assisted with a summary of Principles contained therein, is by its Office to search into, and discern the lawfulness or unlawfulness of things, and to direct and order how things lawful in themselves may be performed in a right man-



ner, and to right end; and how things, either evil in themselves, or of an ill tendency, ought to be forborn and avoided; also to receive and examine actions done by us, both as to their matter and form, whether they be good or evil: and that every man is highly concerned to take good heed to this Rule by which his Conscience ought to be guided, because its determinations are like unto those of a supreme Dictator, speaking Oracles within us, and exercising an Authority over us, having in that respect some kind of co-ordinate power and authority with God; and for that also, as Conscience without Divine Authority, will not justify an action, so God will not accept it, without the concurrent authority of Conscience; without the one, our pretended service is unlawful, without the other unreasonable.

The perfect, and that which is to every Christian the only adequate Rule of Conscience, being the Will and Law of God written in the Heart, and revealed in the Scripture; it is hence presumed, that every Christian is endued both with a natural and an enlightened Mind and Conscience: and this Will and Law of God, comprehended under these two general branches, hath an immediate and sovereign authority over their Conscience. It is God alone who knows the inward workings thereof, and he only can punish it when it sinneth; and the obligation which lies upon the Conscience of every Christian to observe Humane Laws and Constitutions, as they correspond with this Divine Law, is because God hath as well by his Law written on the Heart, as his revealed Will in the Scriptures commanded it should be so: and hence it is that natural Obligations, and such humane Constitutions as correspond with this Divine Law, are not infringed, but corroborated by Christianity; for that discharges no man from, but better informs every man in the knowledge of his Duty towards God and Man; and binds the Conscience of every Christian to the discharge of all relative Duties in his station amongst Men, as he will answer it (not only to those who have Authority on Earth, but also) to God himself, if against the light and obligation of Conscience he therein transgresseth the Will of God.

In this respect *Christians* have a double advantage, and are under a double Obligation above all others. For, *1<sup>st</sup>*, They partake in common with other Men of the universal Law of Nature, engraven on the Heart, which no positive or revealed Institution discharges any Man from. *2<sup>d</sup>*, They have the Written and Revealed Will and Law of God in the Holy Scriptures, with which, by

1 Pet.  
14.  
Rom.  
1, 3.

1 Tim.  
Hol. 6.  
1 Pet.

Divine Grace and Providence, they are priviledged above others, and, through Faith, enabled to make a more clear and distinct Judgment of the Principles and End as well of Divine as Moral Actions; as they tend to the Service and Glory of God, the Good of their Neighbours, and their own Peace and Happiness.

Hence also it is, that the Peace, Comfort and Joy of a *Christian*, proceeding from the discharge of a good Conscience towards God and Man, exceeds all that can be apprehended by a meer natural light, as having some favour and relish in its Soul of that love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and of that peace of God which passeth understanding.

For though the freedom from the accusation of conscience be not his compleat justification before God, yet it gives him confidence towards God: and on the contrary, the confusion, darkness, perplexity, horrour and despair of a person acquainted with the Will of God, revealed in the Scriptures, wilfully sinning against Knowledge and the expresse dictates and judgment of his own Conscience, do far exceed all that can be spoken by such who have no other but a natural light; for though that extends itself very far, yet the severity of God against such transgressions is more clearly and distinctly represented in the Holy Scriptures, than in any other Writings; for as the sin of such a person hath in it all manner of aggravations to render it most heinous, so the Judgments of the righteous God therein revealed against such an impenitent sinner, are of all others declared to be the most dreadful, intolerable, unavoidable, irremediable, endless.

It is not our intention to speak any thing herein more largely concerning the Nature and Effects of Conscience, than what is to our present purpose; many entire and useful Discourses of very learned and pious Persons are extant on this Subject, wherein is observed, (that which we are all obliged to take notice of) that God by his providence hath preserved in the innermost seat of our hearts some (*semitulæ*) little sparks of that greater light, wherewith the mind of man was invested before his fall; that these sparks of light are continued with us, that they may be publishers of the good Pleasure and Will of God concerning us, and monitors of our obedience. 1<sup>st</sup>, To those common Principles of his Law written in our Hearts, (to do Good, and eschew Evil) which by reason of their highest evidence, instantly as soon as they are offered to our mind and thoughts, command our Faith, and compel our Assent. 2<sup>d</sup>, To his revealed Will, contained in the Holy Scriptures, so soon as  
there

thro' his grace, either by the Discourse or Writings of others, or by our own search; we have the knowledge thereof. And by how much any man does frequent and exercise his natural Light in the study and search after the knowledge of this revealed Will of God, his Creator and only Lord and Law-giver, and thereby square and order his Inclinations, Affections, and Conversation, by so much the more shall he be secured from, and strengthened to resist the raging tyranny of his own inbred Lusts, and blind and lawless Appetite, and the enchanting Flatteries, Inticements, Discourses, and Examples of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth; who for the more effectual razing out of our minds (as much as is possible) the little remains of natural Light, and blinding the mind, and hardning the heart against the perception and reception of supernatural Light, do all they can to see the Conscience free from all Obligations to the Will and Law of God, by introducing and setting up in the mind another Rule, viz. that of their own Appetite, private Interest and Uility: Than which, nothing can be more rebellious against God, pernicious to humane Society, or destructive to him that hath drenched in such a damnable Delusion.

For as that first and great Command of God, *scilicet*, To love him with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind, and with all the strength; and that second, which is like unto it, To love our Neighbour as our selves, are the principal Branches of that Universal Law of God, whereby all other Branches thereof are to be interpreted, and on which all the rest depend; so by Obedience thereto in Faith, out of a pure Heart and good Conscience, our Union, Fellowship and Communion with God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and one with another, is maintained, confirmed, and enlarged; and we thereby brought to have our Conversation in Heaven whilst we are on Earth, and prepared for everlasting Habitations with the Saints in light. And on the contrary, they which are lovers of Pleasures more than lovers of God, who make their God their Belly, glory in their shame, mind earthly things, stop the voice of their Conscience, act contrary to its Dictates, and strive to thrust from them, as long and as far as they can, the terrors thereof, are, whilst they remain upon Earth, on the very borders of Hell, and every moment ready to sink into Destruction and everlasting Perdition.

We have made this brief Reflection on the Nature and Office of Conscience, as deeming it may be now, and at all times, useful to

2 Cor.  
Joh. 7.  
17.  
Hof. 6.  
2 Tim.  
14. to  
ind.  
Eph. 4.  
18, 19.  
ch. 5.  
Judg.  
11. -  
1 Tim.  
4. 3.  
2 Pet.  
to the  
2 Cor.

Mat. 2.  
37, 38.  
Mat. 23.  
30.  
Tim. 1.  
to the  
1 Joh.  
6, 7.

Phil. 3.  
2 Tim.  
2, 3, 4.  
Phil. 3.  
19.  
Rom. 8, 9.  
Jam. 9.  
2 Tim.  
9, 10.  
2 Pet.  
2, 3.

your selves and all that read it, whilst remaining in the state of the living; but we make not, so much as in our thoughts, any Reflection upon: (or Application of any thing we have herein said to) the state of him that is dead, further than to declare how sadly he experimented in the course and issue of his Life, what has been here spoken of; the horror of an offended and awakened Conscience, and to extol the Judgment of Charity, which only appertains unto us concerning his sorrows for his sin; servent desires to be forgiven of those he has injured, attempts after a publick Recantation of his Evils, endeavours to repent and pray for forgiveness of God. The final Judgment we leave to him who is the proper and only Judge of the secrets of his heart, with our servent Prayers to God, that we who have heard, and all that shall read the ensuing Narrative, treasure up in our hearts what is therein instructive to us, so as to have it always ready in our minds, as a seasonable Warning, never in the like or in any other case, wilfully to put to a peradventure the Eternal Salvation of our precious and immortal Souls.

### *A brief Account of the Life of Mr. John Child:*

**H**E was born at Bedford, about the year 1638; and, when he was grown up, put Apprentice to an Handicraft Trade, which when he came of age he followed for some time; afterwards he betook himself to another Calling, and removed to *Newport-Pagnel*, where he lived divers years, married twice, and by his last Wife (of honest Parentage, and good Report) he had several Children; after his second Marriage, in appearance he increased in his Estate. About five years since, he removed to *London*, and in *October* last he ended his days by hanging himself in a House he had taken the last Spring in *Brick-lane* near *Spittlefields*.

He was endued with a competent measure of natural Parts, and vivacity of Spirit. In his youth he applied himself to the reading and study of the Scriptures, and attained to a greater knowledge in matters of Religion, than many of his Equals in years and Education. In his Opinion and Practice he was for the Baptism of Believers, and consorted with some of us, who are called *Anabaptists*, for about twenty years; and for divers years, (at seasons, exercised himself in Preaching.

He was observed for some years before his dreadful Fall, to be very remiss in Religious Exercises; and in his ordinary Conversation,

to frequent other Company than he had done in former times.

He was of a very haughty Spirit, and petemptory in asserting his Opinions. He sought to exalt himself above what became either his Profession or Attainments. All which, when the Hand of God was heavy upon him for his open sins, he freely acknowledged with severe Charges against himself for his Pride and Hypocrisie, as you will find in the following Relations.

*A Narrative of Mr. John Child's Trouble of Spirit, and Deplo-  
rable End. Of some of the Conferences had with him in the  
times of his Troubles: and of such Papers as were written by  
him on this Subject.*

SOON after the said Mr. John Child had published his foremen-  
tioned second Argument, which was about the latter end of  
the year 1682, he signified to some of his intimate Acquaintance,  
that his mind was perplexed, for what he had therein done; but yet  
bare the trouble so, as not to make any great shew of it in his gene-  
ral Behaviour, until about the beginning of July 1684, when he  
could no longer bear or conceal the horrors of his mind, but spake  
of it to some that came accidentally to see him, and sent to several  
others of his Acquaintance to come to him, to whom when they  
came, he disclosed the miserable Condition into which he had  
brought himself, and the occasion thereof, in such manner, as that  
it became publickly known to many of his Acquaintance and  
Neighbours, and occasioned many, besides those sent for to villsit  
and discourse with him, and others to write to him, the substance  
whereof, with his Answers, you have as follows.

*Some Account of Mr. John Child, by Mr. -- D.*

MY Acquaintance with Mr. Child was of about fifteen years  
standing. About two years since meeting with a Book  
which I was informed he had caused to be published but two days  
before I saw it, I went presently and gave him a visit, and found him  
in his Chamber in a very pensive posture, his Eyes red with Tears,  
he immediately acknowledged he was the Author of it, and bit-  
terly exclaimed against himself, that he wrote it in malice, and  
by the instigation of the Devil, from very ill principles of Pride,  
Vain-glory, and Hypocrisie. I quickly found the wound upon his  
Spirit was very deep, and therefore forbore all Aggravations, and  
endeavoured to administer some spiritual Relief to him.



After this, in his Discourse to others, he seemed not to have so sharp a sence upon his Mind: but for ought I could observe, the Sore continued festered inwardly, from the first time he reflected upon his publishing that Book, to the end of his miserable Life, tho' it brake not out openly, till about July last. About August last I gave him another Visit, and then found him (tho' naturally of a strong Constitution and lively Spirit) so exceedingly shaken, that the horror of the sight made such deep impressions, as I think will at seasons recur, and set to task before me afresh, as long as I live. His Speech was very regular, which discovered his Memory to be good, and that his Distemper had not seized his Head, but his Heart. He freely discoursed the grief of his Mind, expressing and setting forth his Condition to be most deplorable, as having no hopes of salvation. I said before him, with the greatest tenderness, the freeness and riches of Gods Grace, chusing to argue from his own former declared Opinion against limiting of it, but could fasten no word of consolation or hope upon him.

With some Reluctancy he granted me liberty to pray with him; but said, his Spirit was shut up, he could not pray; and while I was praying he often groaned, and after I had ended, told me, God would make him a terrible Example to this present Age, and tho' he was full of benignity, yet he was also a terrible God, being provoked. These Expressions, and the horror that appeared in his Eyes and all parts of his body, drew many tears from mine Eyes, and rendered the Spectacle so dreadful that (I cannot say as is reported of one that visited *Francis Spira*, that he would go a thousand miles to see another *Spira*; but on the contrary) I desire I may never see the like Spectacle again, whilst I live in this world.

He told me he thought (either in a dream, or when he was awake, he could not tell which) that I should say to him, If he died the common death of all men, the Lord had not spoken by me: I answered, He better knew the temper of my Spirit and Principles, than to conceive such a thought of me, or that I should take up the words of the Prophet of God divinely inspired, and apply them to him: but all I could say, abated nothing of the horror of his Soul, that I could perceive.

This Comment I make upon it, that if any Atheist in the world, who had formerly known this man, and had conversed with him in all his Agonies, he would have been sufficient to have convinced him that there is a Power besides, and so much above Nature, as can with a touch shake and disorder, and turn into confusion the strong.



est constitution of body, by ministring and fastning terrible things upon the Soul.

That when God wounds the Spirit of a man, neither he himself can bear it, nor can any other aid him. Therefore it is a fearful thing to fall under the Wrath of the living God, who is a consuming Fire, and can at his pleasure awaken a stupid Conscience, and revive upon it the memory and horror of such sins as seem to be past over and forgotten.

My Prayer is, that this man being made as a Pillar of Salt, may warn the present and future Ages of the danger of sinning against the present Light of their Understandings.

*The Effect of a Conference between Mr. John Child and Mr. B. K.*

**A**Bout the middle of July 1684. Mr. B. K. went to see Mr. Child, not hearing the least report of any trouble he was then under, and after some discourse which passed between them, Mr. K. occasionally mentioned that Book called, *A Second Argument*, telling Mr. Child, he was reported to be the Author thereof: which he presently acknowledged, and cried out against himself in a bitter manner, saying, What he had done therein, was out of Malice and Revenge against those People; and seemed to abhor himself for casting such abominable Reproaches upon them, whom he said, he knew deserved it not; and presently desired Mr. K. to go up stairs with him, which he did: and then he farther signified to him his deplorable condition, and what horror and anguish of Soul he lay under, and that there was no mercy for him. And Mr. K. being on a sudden surprized with his deep expression of horror, of which he had heard nothing, it did amaze him; yet he endeavoured with the utmost of his ability to comfort him, by shewing the greatness of Gods mercy to true penitent persons, together with the infinite worth and value of Christs Blood, telling him withal, that he was glad to find he had the sense of his great Evil on his heart, or words to that effect, and that he hoped this breaking, was in order to healing: But Mr. Child said, he doubted of that. And all the Words and Arguments Mr. K. could use to satisfy him, were in vain: so that at that time, it being late at night, he took his leave of him.

Mr. K. Soon after, he came to seek me at my house; but then I could not stay long with him. But a few days after, when he sent for me, I went, and found him in bed rowling and tumbling up and down in a lamentable manner, enough to pierce ones heart.

said to him, *Mr. Child, I thought by your departure, when you was in my house, the burden was pretty well off; or to that effect.*

*Mr. Child.* No, no, my burden is greater than I can bear. I would fain be satisfied on touching one thing.

*Mr. K.* What is that?

*Mr. Jo. Child.* Whether my sin may not be that against the Holy Ghost.

*Mr. K.* I hope and believe it is not.

*Mr. Child.* But I wrote the Book out of malice.

*Mr. K.* There is a great deal of difference between doing a thing out of malice and prejudice against the Lord's People, and acting out of malice against Christ himself, or doing despite to the Spirit of Grace. I do not doubt, but that you always had holy and reverent dread and respect to the Name of God; that you will be take up a great offence against some of his People.

*Mr. Child.* I have often bad that Scripture brought to me, Psal. 50. 19, 20. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and with thy tongue thou forgett'st deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother, and slanderest thy mothers son. And of that which follows: Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces.

*Mr. K.* But pray observe, tho' you should be guilty of that great evil there mentioned, yet there is ground of hope in that you are disposed to consider—I used many Arguments to persuade him to rely on the mercy of God thro' Christ, mentioning that passage of the Prophet David, *Forgive me my sin, for it is great;* and how wonderfully he had manifested and magnified the attribute of his mercy, in pardoning great and bloody sinners.

*Mr. Child.* (Breaking forth into bitter tears, cried out,) I know that the Majesty of Heaven is a good and gracious Being, yet when provoked (stretching forth his hands in a frightful manner) he is a terrible God.

*Mr. K.* I think it is necessary that you retract what you have written in that Book, for that I think nothing short of it will be a demonstration of the sincerity of your heart; and proof of the truth of your repentance.

*Mr. Child.* I have begun to write, but I cannot write, neither have I any one of the Books.

*Mr. K.* I will see and get some of them, and send it to you.

At another time I advised him to consult some Physician about his health.—To which he made no answer.

*Mr. K.* Shall I acquaint any persons with your condition? (mentioning some worthy Ministers to him, whom he knew Mr. Child formerly had a great esteem for).

*Mr. Child. I should be glad to see Mr. P.*  
*Mr. K. Blured him he would do his endeavour therein, and accordingly did, and made known his fearful state to divers others; by which means Mr. Y. sent him a comfortable Letter, and many godly persons went to visit him.*

*Mr. K. at another Visit not long before his death, perceiving the anguish of his Spirit was rather greater than ever, asked him, Have you not yet any more light?*

*Mr. Child. No, nor never shall.*

*Mr. K. Shall I and two or three more, such as you shall best approve of, come and spend some time in Prayer to the Lord for you? — To which he gave no answer, tho' much press to it.*

*Mr. Child at another time said, I have touched the Apple of God's Eye — I am damned.*

*Mr. Child's Wife said, That she found sometimes in the night-season, that the very ends of his Hair did stand in drops, thro' the anguish of his Spirit, continually crying out against himself for writing that Book.*

### A Letter in July 1684. from Mr. J. to Mr. Child.

*I Am informed that your Soul is greatly afflicted in the sense of your Evil: I design not to add to your grief, but as I ought to pity the afflicted. Our Lord will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax: And I have learned from him my part, the duty of a true Neighbour, to do what I can for cleansing and healing the Wounds you have made in your own Conscience.*

*Therefore, I pray you consider, 1. God's own Children are sometimes guilty of backsliding. 2. That 'tis the Will of God, they should return to him from whom they have revolted. 3. That he is ready to receive and heal them upon their return; and I pray God you may be helped to say the next words in sincerity of heart. Behold I come unto thee, for thou art the Lord my God.*

*Consider, upon repentance and returning, God will abundantly pardon such as have abundantly sinned. The Lord help you to plead as David did, For thy name sake, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.*

*Consider, Christ is able to save to the utmost, them that come unto God by him. Let these few Lines be acceptable to you, from him who prays for you, and remains*

*Your Cordial Friend,*

*J. J.*

Upon the receipt and reading this Letter, Mr. Child was heard to say, *What! a J. J. whom I have so greatly loved, so kind to me? and presently set Pen to Paper, and writ, and in some few days sent a doleful Letter to the said J. J. A Copy whereof follows.*

Mr. J.

July 30. 1684.

**Y**ours I received this day, but without date, the latter part of which hath attained its wish and desire; for it is very acceptable unto me, and can be no otherwise, where the least degrees of gratitude do remain. And for the Expressions of your Christian love, and desires of my happiness in all respects, lays a double obligation upon me to esteem your friendship. What you have been informed of, my Souls affliction, is true, and I think no small cause for it, dishonour to God, grieving his Spirit, sinning against Christ, blaspheming his Tabernacle, persecuting the Saints, grieving and wounding thousands dear to Jehovah; stumbling the Weak, shortning Life, weakening Senses, destroying rational Powers, giving occasion to the wicked to blaspheme, and the unexcused to rejoice; the destroying inward Peace and outward Felicity, the turning Light into Darkness, and the Noon-day into horrible Night; the provoking God to make the Heavens Brass, the Earth Iron, and the Rain nothing but Powder and Dust; the shutting a man out from the comforts of the Promises, and bringing of him under the most dismal Threats that ever an Almighty Being gave forth; marring all Comforts, spoiling all Joys, making the Life a Burthen, and Death a Terror; the putting besides Duty, and all acceptable improvements of Talents; the giving the Devil advantage, and bringing the Salvation into imminent danger; the being possest with Doubts, Fears, and Tremblings night and day; the sad savour of Gall and Wormwood, and harsh relish of Gravel-stones; the sad apprehensions of Curses, Blasting, and Milderew, of Caterpillars, Locusts, and Cancer-worms; the dismal sound of the mad Prophets words, I shall see him, but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh, is a sufficient ground of Soul-affliction. Your tender aim and charitable design in the balmy Application you sent, I have reason well and kindly to resent, and wish they had been high enough to hit the mark, and have answered the design. Had I been a Backslider of an ordinary size, they might have had an effectual Operation: but to that it is vastly different; I have a Voice behind me, or dire Texts, that make a dreadful sound. To love and to make lies, is a qualification for the Lake. He shall have Judgment without mercy, that shewes none. To offend one little one, is a sin against Christ, and a condition worse than to have a Millstone about the neck with a cast into the Sea. To slander the Mothers Son, is near destruction by a tearing to pieces; but what is prepared and iustly

justly deserved, for condemning many Generations of the just, branding and wounding and grieving Thousands and Ten Thousands of good and just Men, by charging Consequences upon their Principles, beyond the sense of their minds; and rendering them not only misled and deceived, but no Church, no Christians, vile Monsters, Infidels, Robbers of God, nay, Murderers of the worst sort and highest order, great Enemies to their Native Country; but the aking of my Heart, stops the progress of my Hand, upon the repetition of these astonishing things. I thank you for your kindness; I beg pardon for my own shortness, and conclude these Lines very late and hopeles.

John Child.

After the receipt of this from Mr. J. Child, J. J. wrote again to him to this effect;

Mr. John Child,

Aug. 1. 1684.

**I**N continuance of my tender Compassions, because of your Soul's Afflictions, and being encouraged by your kind acceptance of those few Lines I sent you before, I now write again, taking notice of your many doleful Expressions, wherein you highly, and I hope humbly aggravate your Backsliding from God; wrangling his Servants, and toward the close, that my application of God's healing backsliding Children, might have by the Mark, had you been a Backslider of an ordinary sort; Now therefore, that I may be a little helpful to your distressed Soul, (if the Lord please to support you from sinking into the sad Gulph of Despair.) 1st. Consider the greatness of David's sin of Adultery, and contriving the Death of Uriah, yet being truly penitent, he was graciously pardoned. 2ly, The greatness of Manasseh's Sins, his Idolatry, causing his Children to pass thro' the Fire, using Enchantments and Witchcrafts, dealing with familiar Spirits, filling Jerusalem with innocent Blood; yet humbling himself in his misery, he obtained mercy of God. 3ly, That God hath offered mercy to Scarlet and crimson sinners. 4ly, Not only to ordinary but extraordinary backsliders. 5ly, To Peter, after he denied his Master with Cursing and Swearing. 6ly, Christ came to save the chief of sinners. 7ly, He will not cast off any that come to him, and is able to save them to the utmost. Submit therefore to Mercy upon a probability; upon a perhaps God may forgive; Go to Christ as one condemned, and deserving to be executed, and plead, that you have heard the King of Israel is a merciful King. Thus, with my Prayers for you, I am

Your Soul's real Friend,

After



After Mr. John Child received this Letter, Mr. J. F. and other Friends visiting him, he read it to them, trembling and paraphrasing thereon, sadly bemoaning himself, saying, that the mercy that David, Manasse, and Peter had, did not belong to him, and wept bitterly.

Mr. J. F. advised him to write an Answer of that Letter, to Mr. J. F. which in few days he did, and sent it by Mr. F. but before it was delivered, Mr. Child came himself to Mr. J. who gave him a friendly welcome, and asked how it was with him? he answered, I am very bad; it is very bad with me. Mr. J. replied, But God is very good, yea, abundantly good to them who have been abundantly bad to him. Mr. Child laid his hand upon his breast, and said, I shall never lose those Notions of God's goodness, but what is that to me? I cannot make any application of it to myself, and as he was walking to and fro, greatly disturbed in his mind, he made a sudden stand, and said, I think I am damned. To which Mr. J. returned to this effect: God's thoughts are not as Man's thoughts; sometimes Men think of themselves better than God thinks of them; sometimes Men think worse of themselves, and of their state, than God thinketh. I hope God's thoughts concerning you, differ from your thoughts in this latter sense; think on that Text, *Isa. 55. 8. My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.* Mr. Child said, I have Preached from that Text formerly, and presently repeated these words: *Esa* found no place for Repentance, though he sought it carefully with Tears. Mr. J. replied, *Esa* could not prevail with his Father. Then Mr. Child lay down very sad, and said, I cannot repent. Mr. J. replied, Christ is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins; Therefore cry to him to give you this repentance. Mr. Child (after a little time of silence) repeated that word, *He shall have judgment without mercy, that sheweth no mercy.*

It is observable, that Mr. Child's design in coming to Mr. J. was to engage him not to shew the Letter which he had sent him by Mr. F. but to conceal it; and while they were reasoning together, Mr. F. came in, and delivered the Letter to Mr. J. but after he had read it, he told Mr. Child, it was not convenient to conceal the matter of it, because it would engage godly persons to pray for him; but Mr. Child, with a dreadful look, fixed his Eyes on Mr. J. inacht the Letter out of his hand, and then was troubled he had so done; whereupon Mr. J. consented to his carrying it



away, that he might not increase the trouble of his mind; which Mr. Child took kindly: and so they parted to bed on Monday night. After the death of Mr. Child, that Letter was found among his Papers; a Copy whereof take as follows.

Mr. J. J.

**Y**our kind and Christian Letter I received, and I thank you for the great Pains you took to comfort me, and keep me from immediate desperation; but still my Burden remains great, and mine Iniquities are great date, and many Old Sins, as well as some of late, come to mind; Wrath is coming to the utmost: I am forsaken of God; Good Men are mine Enemies; I hate my self; I am afraid and ashamed abroad; I am confused and distressed at home; The Scriptures look dreadfully upon me; I have not only taken up a Reproach against my Neighbour, which concludes a man God's holy bill, Psal. 15. but have raised Reproach, increased Reproach, and by it wronged multitudes; slanderously reported it to the Nation: It's just by St. Paul's sentence, Afraid I am to live, afraid I am to die; Judgment I fear will be terrible in this World, and more in the World to come; Some mens sins go before-hand to judgment, and those that do not, cannot be hid when we come before the great Tribunal; I cannot give an account of my Actions to Men, how much less to God; my Heart condemns me, and he is greater, and knows more; I think I have not only outdone Cain, Balaam, and Judas, but many of the Devils themselves; What I said against Men was at an ill time; there is all bad Circumstances attended my Actions; I could not have thought I had done such things, till I lately look them over; I dread Damnation, but can see no way to escape; I know God's mercy is great above the Heavens; but it is barred up, and cannot pass to me, I cannot perform the conditions of obtaining; I have dismal Temptations, they have almost broken me to pieces; I am not reconciled to those I have offended, how then shall my gift be accepted; If I am justly sentenc'd down Earth, it is bound in Heaven; how then shall it be reversed? my Friends will not be reconciled and at peace with me: Much more I could write, but want time. I remain him that calls himself, a Devil incarnate.

To which Letter of Mr. Child's— Mr. J. upon the memory of what he had read, might before Mr. Child took it out of his hand, return an Answer to this effect. That he sympathiz'd with his Sorrows, and was very much concerned at the dreadful charge therein laid upon himself, which by all the Arguments in Scriptures he could think upon, he endeavour'd to remove the weight that op-

press his mind from their influence, and particularly, that his Brethren whom he had offended, were ready with open Arms and Hearts to receive him, and forgive any wrongs he had done unto them. Much of the Matter of the Letter we have omitted, because of its similitude with what he had formerly wrote.

*The Effect of several Conferences between Mr. Child, and Mr. H. C.*

**M**R. C. I am come, Mr. Child, with a design to serve your Soul, if it lye in my power.

Mr. Child. God hath for several Years past, been rending and tearing me in my Estate, cursing and blasting all I have put my hand to, and prospered me in nothing, (and, in much horror, clapping his hands to his Heart, said,) Here it is, and I shall die.

Mr. C. I am informed your Trouble arises from the publishing a Book, entituled, *The Second Argument for a more firm Union amongst Protestants*. What part of that Book troubles you most?

Mr. Child. (Taking up the Book in his hand, began to read where he saith, the greatest Number of Dissenters do hold Principles dangerously heretical, and most abominably abusing the most holy and blessed God, &c. but before he could end that Paragraph, being under extreme agony of mind, and weeping bitterly, put the Book from him, and spake to this effect, viz.) I have represented those of *Calvin's* Principles beyond whatever they conceived, strained their Opinions beyond their Intentions, and drawn such Consequences as never were in their minds, and, striking his breast with much anguish, said, These Words lye close; I shall never get over this; I writ in prejudice against them, calling them a villanous body of People, which was unjust.

Mr. C. said, Are you not heartily sorrowful for writing this?

Mr. Child. Oh that I could repent; I cannot repent.

Mr. C. If it were now to do, would you do it again? the best part of repentance is to turn from evil.

Mr. Child. I know there is in Repentance three things; *Confession, Contrition, and Restitution*.

Mr. C. We are not capable of making God restitution, he pardons and justifies for his own Name's sake, and Christ's sake; but restitution is to be made to our Neighbour; and if you are sensible God hath been dishonoured, and his People wronged in that Book, your next work is to make restitution in like manner, by a

**Mr. Child.** This is the opinion of some others also, and I think it ought to be done; (and walking about the Room, with great horror of soul, said,) I have been guilty of many Evils: I have for several years lived a very ungodly Life, neglected Family-duty, Closet-duty, Publick-duty in the Church of God; I have been greatly guilty of Pride, endeavouring to run every man down in dispute; I have made this World my God, and been guilty of that Idolatry, *Eph. 5.* I have not been a little guilty of Hypocrisie; I have endeavoured by all ways and means to shake the Cross of Christ from off my shoulders; and I fear I have been guilty of Blasphemy: I have wronged many a poor Soul by writing as I have done; I have wished myself in their condition, and would have given many Thousands of Pounds, (had I had it) to have been in as good a condition as some of them I write against: I have discoursed you, and Mr. B. and J. and have thought to run down your Opinion by a Spirit of Insolency and Pride, but the Judgments of God have followed me; he hath rent and torn me for these things, and now I shall die, I am struck with death.

**Mr. C.** Suppose you should die to Night, (as we know not how it may be with any of us) can you contentedly sink into the Abyss of Misery, without striving for Salvation? would you not run to Christ? strive to take hold of him and his purchased blessedness.

**Mr. Child,** (with a very grim countenance said,) I shall go to Hell; I am broken in judgment; when I think to Pray, either I have a flushing in my face, as if I were in a flame, or I am dumb and cannot speak, or else I fall asleep upon my knees; all the signs of one whom God hath left forsaken and hardened.

**Mr. C.** If God should impute to you the righteousness of Christ, would it be of any advantage to you?

**Mr. Child.** If God would be so gracious, as to impute Christ's righteousness to me, it would make me a happy man.

**Mr. C.** Did you do what you did, in writing that Book, against the light of your Conscience, or motions of the Spirit?

**Mr. Child.** I think I did not formally sin against the light of my Conscience and Spirit of God; yet what I did, was mixt with malice, with this cheat in my heart, It may be it may do them good. The Night before the Book was published, I had some reluctancy and gripes of Conscience.

**Mr. C.** Why did you not call them in before they were published?

**Mr. Child.** I fell ill upon it, and found myself more and more

entangled and ensnared; one door was opened, and another door was opened to my ruin, as if I were a man designed for damnation.

After some reasonings about Baptism, Conformity, and the Troubles which Nonconformists were under, (he said,) I have abundance of carnal fleshly Reasonings, I am under the power of unbelief and distrust; for these are my Arguings in me, Should I stick to the Church of *England*, then those I have written against, would account me the greatest Hypocrite in the world, to make so much ado about despair, for what I have done against them; Should I leave the Church of *England*, and stick to the Dissenters, and with full purpose of heart cleave to the Lord, then, if ever I am taken in a Meeting, they will have no mercy on me, and triumph, This is the Man who made his Recantation, and then ruin me to all intents and purposes, and I cannot bear the thoughts of a Cross, nor a Prison.

Mr. C. Two things are essentially necessary to the peace of your Soul, with all speed to publish your Recantation, and set your self to know the truth of God, and cleave to it.

Mr. Child. What an astonishing consideration is it for a man to die in this condition I am in; To be under horror for writing such things, and yet have no power to renounce it; for should I do so, I should be quickly ruined in my Estate; I had a fancy the other morning, that the Sheriffs and their Officers were coming to seize all that I had; and about a week since I had that word, *Can thine heart endure, or thy hands be strong, in the day I will contend with thee?* I think I am now able to satisfy any *Atheist* in the world, that there is a God; for I find the Arrows of the Almighty sticking in me, and he runneth upon me as a Lyon. I thought, that I could go and fall at the feet of those I have wronged, and beg their forgiveness, and wished often, O that I could repent! O that God would wash me in the fountain of his Son's blood! O that I had faith, that I could believe!

Mr. H. C. (Taking leave of Mr. Child.) Can you not desire my Prayers?

Mr. Child. This is a hard Question; (and, after a little pause, taking Mr. C. by the hand, said,) for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, pray for me at night, if there be any mercy yet left, that I may yet lie in the way of mercy.

Mr. C. (Finding the Troubles of Mr. Child still continuing and increasing.) What do you think would give you relief?

ON Mr. Child. If I were in Heaven, it could not relieve me; for there I should behold the face of a holy God, holy Saints and Angels, (as now I behold the face of good men upon Earth) with shame and confusion of face.

Mr. C. If God would take you into his favour, that would relieve you.

Mr. Child. His wrath is come upon me to the uttermost.

Mr. G. To despair, reflects upon the Sovereignty of God's grace.

Mr. Child. For those whole day of grace is not gone, God will multiply to pardon, but it is too late for me, my day is gone.

Mr. C. Did not you write a Book before the second Argument? Aug. 3

Mr. Child. I did.

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Mr. C. Did not a Gentleman write some Animadversions upon it, by way of Answer in a Manuscript.

Mr. Child. He did.

Mr. C. Was it a sufficient Answer.

Mr. Child. It was rationally answered.

Mr. C. Yet you printed this Book afterward.

Mr. Child. I did.

After some time of calm reasoning, Mr. Child began to be again in a great horror, and spake to the effect following.

Mr. Child. I am one of the greatest Hypocrites that ever lived upon the Earth, and shall be so accounted; God hath done his will, and will do his will upon me. *The wicked shall fall into mischief, and the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; He that is false shall have peace, and walketh in the imagination of his evil heart, the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man.* Oh he thunders upon me! should God let out the fence of my sins on me, (as he will) I should howl like a Dog, roar like a Lyon, bellow like an Ox, mine inward parts would melt within me, as the bras melts in the flaming furnace; I shall lye lower than Judas, lower than Judas, I have sinned worse than Judas.

Mr. C. You make application of the Curses in the Book of God, but not of the Promises; Consider *Isai. 55. Psal. 34. 5.*

Mr. Child. Promises are Bread for Children; They look on him, I were lightened; I look unto him, and am darkened; he knows, I have committed such wickedness as never hath been done.

C. Do you not sometimes find an inclination to Pray?

Child. Seldom or never; onely about an hour before you I went about it, but the end was dismal. That day you



were here with Mr. W. I attempted it three times, but could do nothing.

Mr. C. Shall I pray for you?

Mr. Child. No, no; 'tis too late: neither Men nor Angels can relieve me.

Mr. C. *Job saith, Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*

Mr. Child. About two months since, I thought I had comfort and relief from thence; but now I cannot trust in him; God saith he will deal in a singular manner with me here on Earth, and in Hell also.

Afterwards quoted against himself those Expressions, *Heb. 10. 26.* For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received and acknowledged that truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin. *2 Pet. 2. 20, 21, 22.* For if after they have escaped from the filthiness of the world, through the acknowledging of the Lord and the Saviour Jesus Christ, are yet tangled again therein and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning; For it had been better for them, not to have acknowledged the way of righteousness, than after they have acknowledged it, to turn from the holy commandment given unto them: But it is come unto them according to the true proverb; The dog is returned to his own vomit, and the sow that was washed, to the wallowing in the mire. And Mr. Child said, When I am faint and low, I now take somewhat to refresh me, but in Hell there is no refreshment, not a drop of water to cool my tongue. I wonder that my Head (tho' it do not ache) doth not burst asunder; it is filled with dismal Cogitations.

Mr. C. with one Mr. R. gave Mr. Child another visit, and Mr. R. put him upon saying the Lord's Prayer.

Mr. Child. I have thought of that, but I dare not say it, for these Reasons: 1<sup>st</sup>, I cannot call God, Father. 2<sup>dly</sup>, I cannot say, *Thy Will be done.* 3<sup>dly</sup>, I cannot say, *Forgive me my Trespases as I forgive them that trespass against me.* — All that I have is curst to me; I cannot give God thanks for what I eat and drink.

Mr. C. Have you a desire to be saved?

Mr. Child. Yes, upon my own terms, and not according to God's.

It was then askt Mr. Child, what those terms were? but he would make no answer; so we parted.

*A Conference of some Friends with Mr. John Child.*

Comp. T HE last time I saw you, you said, you had a peradventure to depend upon, and that was all; I hope you have



**Mr. Child.** No, all is gone. *Company.* Is God gone, and Christ gone?

**Mr. Child.** All is gone; I am undone.

*Company.* I hope the Lord will return again.

**Mr. Child.** You cannot hope so concerning me.

*Company.* Where Christ begins a good work he will perfect it.

**Mr. Child.** If I had any; but all is gone (if ever I had any).

*Company.* You would do well to use the means of Grace, and frequent the Society of God's People, and desire their Prayers, tho' you say you have no mind to pray nor desire their Prayers, yet if you go among them, you know not what God may do for you. Consider 2 King. 7. 4.

**Mr. Child.** I have been so great a sinner against God and the People of God, that God will have no mercy for me.

*Company.* If God bring you out of this condition, it may be more to his honour and glory, and to your strengthening and establishing of his People, than all you have done in times past.

**Mr. Child.** God will glorify himself by me, and make me an Example for the strengthening and establishing of his People; but it shall end in my destruction.

*The substance of some Conferences held between Mr. John Child and Mr. E. P. who was frequently with him in the year before he died.*

**T**HE first time he saw Mr. Child, after he had declared his Trouble, he seemed to be in a very great Agony, often spreading out his Arms, lamentably expressing himself several times, and said,

Oh that I might be a good man; but there is no hopes for me! It is now too late: I am the greatest Hypocrite in nature.

**Mr. P.** Pray you, Mr. Child, instance in particulars.

**Mr. Child.** I have been a dreadful Hypocrite in offering Repentance, when I had none.

**Mr. E. P.** I am a stranger to any Repentance you offered.

**Mr. Child.** I have pretended such a thing, tho' you know it not.

**Mr. E. P.** Do you intend any Repentance you have offered for the printing and publishing that Book?

**Mr. Child.** Yes.

**Mr. E. P.** It seems you confess you ought to repent of the publishing of that Book.

**Mr. Child.** Yes: it requires that Repentance that I shall never be

Mr. P. Friend. Do you think that God is able to pardon you?

Mr. Child. No.

Mr. P. What is your reason?

Mr. Child. God hath sworn in his wrath, that I shall never enter into his Rest.

Mr. P. How do you know that God hath so sworn concerning you?

Mr. Child. (Setting himself down, said) I confess a man should not affirm that which he hath no reason for. — But rose up as one discontented, and gave no further Answer.

Mr. P. Pray you let me be more inwardly acquainted with the State of your Soul.

Mr. Child. The wrath of God is kindled and burns within me — It is impossible for you to imagine my torment, and this is but an earnest penny of my eternal damnation. — I have guilt enough upon me to sink seventeen Kingdoms; and I know the Earth would open its mouth and swallow me up alive, like *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, were it not that God hath reserved me to be a more publick Spectacle of his Anger and displeasure, both to Angels and men. — God hath taken away my Talent from me, and the influence of the divine Spirit hath altogether left me: I can neither pray, nor desire others to pray for me; my heart is perfectly hardened.

Mr. P. Could you wish that those that have an interest in God, should improve it for you?

Mr. Child. How should I, when I cannot desire Jesus Christ to pray for me? I am now out of hopes, for the Prayers of the Godly are recorded in Heaven against me, (floods of tears flowing from his Eyes.) Dear bought Experience hath taught me, that it is not a small thing to trifle with the great Concerns of Religion and Eternity, as most men account it. I have made a God of this World, and neglected God and his Christ; and therefore these things are justly come upon me. I have been a loose and carnal Professor; and if I were in the place of God, I should meet the same measure that God doth to me. My Calamity is even at the door, and all men in a little time will justifie Gods dealing with me.

Mr. P. Pray you explain your self in these things.

Mr. Child. (Evading further Discourse) you shall have the full Account of it in print.

His Wife. Who shall print it?

Mr. P. I suppose Mr. Child intends some signal Impression by Divine Vengeance.

*Mr. Child.* Though what you have said is true, yet it is not what I intended; for I have resolved to give the World an Account of my Condition in a printed Paper.

*Mr. P.'s Friend.* This is an humbling Dispensation, that you are exercised under.

*Mr. Child.* An humbling Dispensation, do you call it! I tell you it is a hardening Dispensation, and I feel it to be so.

*Mr. E. P.* I hope there is mercy yet reserved for you.

*Mr. Child.* I know I shall have mercy, such as the damned have. I do highly justify God in his dealings with me.

*A Friend.* Your justifying the dealings of God with you, is a good sign.

*Mr. Child.* God can open the mouths of Reprobates to justify his proceedings.

*Mr. P.* I hope that God will appear in a way of mercy to your Soul, if you sincerely and heartily apply your self to him.

*Mr. Child.* The most Judicious men know that I am a damned and lost man.

*Mr. P.* (Walking with him in the Fields) You seem now to be more settled in your mind.

*Mr. Child.* Tho' no consideration can yield me peace or comfort, yet the violence of my Torments admits of some intermissions; and therefore I am not so sensibly afflicted at all times, if I had but such a sence of my sin as I ought to have, I should burst asunder, or (like *Judas*) use extremity towards my self.

*Mr. P.* What mean you by that passage (blaspheming his Tabernacle) in your Letter to Mr. F.

*Mr. Child.* By it I intended reproaching and scandalizing the Church.

*Mr. P.* (Taking the Letter out of his pocket) Do you own the Contents of this Letter?

*Mr. Child.* Yes, and it was written by me as with the Pen of a ready Writer. — I would fain believe, but all power is taken away from me.

*Mr. P.* I have discoursed with Mr. M. about your Case, and it is his opinion, that a Recantation is your first step in order to peace in your mind, and spoke it with much concern of your Soul.

*Mr. Child.* (Shedding many tears and expressing a passionate inquiry) Is this true, that he is concerned for me? By which expression, with the manner of it, Mr. P. collected that it gave some ease to the mind of Mr. Child, to have his condition entertained in

*The substance of another Conference between Mr. John Child and*

*Mr. H. D. Mr. E. M. Mr. F. and Mr. J. B.*

Mr. D. **H**OW is it with you, Sir?

Mr. Child. I am in great confusion and disorder in my Spirit—I have sinned against so much Grace, that I am without hopes of receiving mercy.

Company. If your trouble is in respect of the Book which you have written, whereby you have done so much injury to the suffering People of God, the best way we can advise you to, is to free your Conscience from guilt, will be to make your Repentance and Recantation as publick as your sin is, *Jo. 7. 19.*

Mr. Child. I must confess I stand greatly indebted to the Publick, but I am so confused in my mind, that when I think of doing it, I can do nothing.—There are three things which are a burden to me; my sin against God, which is unpardonable; my sin against God's People; and another thing—

Company. What is that other? To which he made no Answer.

Company. Do you think that unpardonable sin you mentioned, is the sin against the Holy Ghost?

Mr. Child. I cannot tell.

Company. Was what you did, done maliciously against God, Christ and the holy Spirit, and God's People?

Mr. Child. No.

Company. Then it may comfortably be concluded, you have not sinned that sin, and therefore you may take encouragement from the comfortable words of Christ, *viz.* that all other sins and blasphemies may be forgiven you, (quoting many proper Scriptures :) Consider the instances of *David, Manassah, Peter, Paul,* and the *Jews* who were guilty of crucifying our Saviour; and imprecated the guilt of his Blood upon their Children, to whom yet our Saviour in his rich mercy commands his Disciples first to preach the Gospel. Is your condition worse than theirs?

Company. It may be your Endeavours heretofore, too much to advance Free-will, and the power of the Creature, may be one reason why the Lord hath permitted you thus to fall.

Mr. Child. You have hit it, Sir; I once thought there was a power in man, but now I find it otherwise, for I cannot pray; the Lord hath taken away the gift of Prayer from me—I have no desire after any thing that is good. I cannot repent.

*Company.* Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins.—Shall we now pray for you?

*Mr. Child.* Yes.

Then one of the *Company* prayed, and upon parting, *Mr. Child* thanked them for their Visit, and said to this effect:—All this will make against me.

*A Conference between Mr. John Child, Mr. T. W. Mr. A. B. and Mr. F. M.*

*Company.* **A**S Physicians visiting their Patients, so Friends, one that is wounded in Spirit, enquire what is the cause of his grief: We pray you declare your mind herein.—To this, for about half an hour, they could obtain no Answer.

*Company.* The Apostle *Paul* endeavoured to recover such again as had fallen from an Article of Faith, without which they could not be saved; and counselled others in meekness to instruct such as oppose themselves, if God peradventure would give them Repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth. What do you think of *Spira's* condition? 1 Cor. 12, 13  
2 Tim. 2, 24

*Mr. Child.* *Spira's* condition was nothing to mine; for wrath is come and coming on me to the utmost, because I have forsaken that which I believed to be true, to embrace that which I knew to be false, thro' slavish fear to keep my self from sufferings.—I sought to be great in the world, but God crost me therein in all my designs. And since the hand of God hath been upon me, my Spirit hath often-times risen against God that gave me nourishment by food and sleep. (And looking to the Ceiling, said,) I see as it were a little light thro' a cranny or crevice, as if I would desire to pray. (then Tears came down his Cheeks abundantly, and he said,) If it would please God to manifest himself to me, I should be such a Monument of Mercy as never was in the world, to be a warning to all others.

*Company.* It's the Apostles counsel, that we confess our faults one to another, and pray one for another, that we may be healed.

*Mr. Child.* (With Tears said) I cannot get this base heart to open it self farther.

*Company.* Shall we pray for you?

*Mr. Child.* No, no, no.

*Company.* It's desired you would set down in Writing the heads of your chief Trouble.



Mr. Child. I did write something to that effect; but when I had done, I destroyed it.

*Some Passages between Mr. John Child and some of his Friends,  
collected by Mr. H. C.*

Mr. Child. (with Mr. R.) I Had a turn in my Spirit the last week, as a result of that warm discourse I had with you and Mr. H. C. concerning the eminency and sovereignty of the grace of God, but it is now gone again.

Mr. R. Implore again the Throne of Grace.

Mr. Child. I regard iniquity in my heart, and God will not hear my Prayer. (And said to another) If God should send an Angel from Heaven to inform him, he should not believe it.

Mr. Child (to Mr. W.) I cannot pray.

Mr. W. How can you, so long as you have a Lye in your right hand? Retract what you have done publickly, or else you cannot expect to have an heart to pray.

Mr. Child. (To Mrs. M.) How deplorable a thing is this, that I who have preached so much of the Glory of another World, should now be deprived of it all!—You will as surely see me damned, as you now see me stand here.

Mrs. M. Have you no intermission?—Do such thoughts always attend you.

Mr. Child. I have intermission sometimes.

Mrs. M. Do you think God cannot save you?

Mr. Child. Yes, he can; or else I might desire to be in Hell immediately.

Mrs. M. Do you think God will not save you?

Mr. Child. I cannot believe that he will.

Mrs. M. What is the cause of all this trouble?

Mr. Child. That cursed Book.

Being at one Mr. G.'s, in discourse concerning *Francis Spira*, Mr. Child said, I am an hundred times greater sinner than *Spira*, a thousand times ten thousand times, yea, a hundred thousand times a greater sinner than he.

Mr. C. Do you love me?

Mr. Child. I love you. (And taking Mr. C. by the hand, said) I conjure thee by the eternal God, that thou take care of my Wife and Children: I would give ten thousand worlds for a God, and often—Oh, what an ungodly Family have I! Husband cannot pray, Wife

cannot

cannot pray, Children cannot pray, Servants cannot pray; while others are serving their God, we do nothing.

Mr. P. Mr. F. Mr. L. giving him a Visit, asked if they should pray with him?

Mr. Child. No, it is too late—The company of good men are a burden to me—They press him to publish Repentance for his Book that had caused him so much trouble.

Mr. Child. I have sometimes thought so to do; but I am so confused and confounded in my mind, that I know not what to do: I can do nothing to purpose.

Mr. L. (Offering him some good Counsel, and he returning no Answer, said) Do you think what I speak is insignificant? is there no weight in what we say?

Mr. Child. There is not only enough in what you say to raise a man from Earth to Heaven, but from Hell to Heaven, unless such an one as I, who have an heart of a Devil—I have no heart to read or pray, all good is departed from me.

Mr. Child, to Mr. M. asking how it was with him, answered, Very ill.

Mr. M. Mean you in body, or mind?

Mr. Child walking up and down the Room very disconsolate, looking much downward,

Mr. M. said, Why do you look so much downward? Look up; for Salvation is not from beneath, but from above.

Mr. Child replied, I would look upward, but I cannot.—To another he said, That hellish Book would ruine him in Body and Souled.

Another said, The learned Dr. Twiss in his *Vindicta Gratia*, confesseth there were depths in the Controversie between *Calvinists* and *Arminians*, which he could not fathom, yet he believed the truth against the *Arminians*.

Mr. Child. Oh I thought I could have dived to the bottom of it by parts, but I see I cannot.—And then, and at many other times said—I am broken in Judgment, I have no consistency in myself: Adding—I have trifled in Religion, trifled, trifled many times: I am lost; there is no hope, no hope.

Another Friend present with him, had mentioned and turned to Prov. i. 25, 26. *Ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh.*

Mr. Child took the Bible, put his finger on the place, shewed it to us, and said, That's my Portion.

Mr. P. speaking to Mr. Child concerning Redemtion and Forgiveness thro' Faith in the precious Blood of Christ, and exhorting him to trust to it.

Mr. Child answered, Oh I cannot reach it, I cannot come at it. — Again (with a deep sigh) said, The black Token of Reprobation are upon me.

Mr. P. You are obliged to stoop to the Sovereignty of God.

Mr. Child. Oh I cannot, I would be above him. Oh that there should be an eternal blessed Being, and I sure never to enjoy him! That there should be an eternal Wrath and Punishment, and I sure to fall, to fall under it! — I shall be an eternal Monument of the Wrath of God!

*The Effect of a Conference had with Mr. John Child, by T. P. between whom there had been for divers years more than a common Intimacy and Conversation.*

MR. Child signified by a Friend, he had a great desire to speak with T. P. and sent a short Letter to him to that purpose, concluding it thus: [*It may be of advantage to the wretched Soul of him who was formerly known to you by the name of John Child.*]

T. P. gave him a meeting, and found him in a very dejected and despairing frame; full of horror and confusion, crying out, (as soon as his Tears would give him leave) that his condition was exceeding bad; that he was a miserable wretch; that he had sinned at an extraordinary rate; that there was no mercy for him; he had been guilty of those things spoken of *Psal. 56. 19. 20.* and that the last verse was a dreadful word to him; for as God had there threatened, so he would do to him, even tear him in pieces.

T. P. God there calls upon men who had forgotten him, to consider in order to Repentance.

Mr. Child. Yen, so it was; and that sometime gave me a little hope; but it was quickly over. (And rising up and walking) smote his breast, saying, Sir, I am damned, I am damned; it is most certainly so! my day is over. Oh that it were with me as on days past! but it is too late; The Decree is gone forth, it is sealed in Heaven, and it is irrevocable; Jesus cannot now save me; he will not, he cannot mediate for me, I have so much offended him, in maliciously abusing his People. — Oh what a Wretch was I! what a

*T. P.* Remember the goodness of God to Mankind.

*Mr. Child.* That is a truth still, that is a truth still; but I cannot lay hold on it: and by how much the more I have believed and asserted it, so much the greater is my Sin and the aggravation of my Condemnation.

*T. P.* Remember what the Prophet speaks, *Jer. 3: 5, 12, 13.* Will he reserve his anger for ever— Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst, Go and proclaim these words— Return thou backsliding Israel— I am merciful, saith the Lord, I will not keep anger for ever, only acknowledge thine iniquity—

*T. P.* Knowing his former temper of Spirit, told him, he feared his Pride and Ambition had prompted him to do and publish such things, whereof he now felt the unsupportable smart.

*Mr. Child.* This is true, Pride and Covetousness hath ruined me, it hath undone me; I have been too much influenced thereby; I have been an Hypocrite; I am so now; I seem to repent; I do not, I cannot repent.

*T. P.* I advise you to take care of your health, and consult with some able Physician, lest this distress and horror of mind bring you under such Distempers as may render you more incapable of receiving that advice and comfort that may be offered to you from the Word of God.

*Mr. Child.* walking to the end of the Room, turned back with a very stern countenance, and striking his hand on his breast, said, No, Sir, I cannot pamper this Body, for God will have it made a remarkable Example to this Generation.

*T. P.* I advise you to frequent hearing the Word of God.

*Mr. Child.* I have no inclination to it.

*T. P.* Offered that some should come and improve some hours in Prayer to God for him; but to this *Mr. Child* gave no answer.

This is the substance of what passed betwixt us about the beginning of *August*. And soon after, going a Journey, I saw him no more.

Many other Passages, to the like effect, were uttered from *Mr. Child*, with which his countenance, gestures, and whole behaviour, bore such a proportion, as were sufficient to evidence to all persons of understanding and sobriety, who had formerly known him, and then heard and beheld him, that he apprehended the Arrows of the Almighty to stick fast in him, and that the troubles, darkness, confusions, horrors and affrightments of his Soul, were not less, if they were not much more, than his Tongue express'd. In the dread

and fear of the righteous Judgments of him who is the searcher of all hearts, whom this Man had so highly offended, in sinning against the light and checks of his Conscience, I suffer not my thoughts to run out concerning his Eternal Estate. His remorse of Conscience, self-condemnation, frequent asking forgiveness of his offended Brethren, begging the Prayers of others, and attempts to pray himself, seemed to favour of that which himself would not allow to be called repentance, perhaps because his publick recantation of the injuries done to his Brethren (which he acknowledged to be just, but by reason of shame, and thereby exposing himself to sufferings and losses, he could not bring his heart thoroughly to consent to it) were by some made the terms of it. And however it pleaseth God, in his long-suffering, to permit, without an open rebuke, such as make it a trade, for gain sake, without any distinction of persons; as ignorantly as maliciously to brand and calumniate a whole Society, with the high Crimes committed by some few that bear their Name, to the scandal and grief of all their Brethren; yet our God is a terrible God, that accepteth no man's person, nor taketh rewards, but is known by the Judgments he executeth; and in this Person we have a dreadful Instance of his High Displeasure against such, who by their Conversation amongst their Brethren, know how to distinguish between the guilty and the innocent, and yet will dare presumptuously, for private and selfish ends, hypocritically, and against the dictates of their own Knowledge and Conscience, maliciously to accuse a whole Party, as guilty of such things, whereof he knows (if there be any) it is but here and there one among thousands, that have ever administered any occasion for such an accusation: which may be a warning to us all how we offend in the like kind.



Mr. John Child's *Aspersions* in his printed *Plea* of the *Nonconformists*, for the *Conformists*, to which, as we suppose, his *Paper*, written with his own *Hand*, transcribed in the other *Volume*, refers.

Page 5. **T**HE Nonconformist have no Order at all, especially the generality of Mechanical Preachers in that Way; for either they leave their Callings, and Concerns of their Families, and run up and down Preaching of their own Heads, upon a phanſical supposition, that they are able to Preach; or else, at most, have but the consent and connivance of a few weak persons, like themselves, who are altogether incompetent Judges in such a weighty Case. The Case being truly thus, as we are able to make it good.

Page 6. I durst undertake, upon a sober debate, to make good, that that loose kind of way, made use of by them, is above measure more intolerable and inconvenient than that of the Church of England.

Mr. Child's *Recantation* in his *Paper*, written with his own *Hand*.

That it is a dishonour to the Church and Clergy of England, to have such an one, that hath no more Wit, so little Justice, Reason and Conscience, plead for them; that the Author of this Libel is worthily so represented, appears by divers base, false, devilish and most scandalous Passages therein contained.

**T**hey are represented as a People weak and phanatical, and not rendring a tolerable Reason for their differing from others, which is a devilish stroke made by a back blow; to assert the Nonconformist have no kind of Order in sending forth their Ministers; that Preachers run on their own heads, upon a phanſiful supposition, that they are able to Preach, or, at most, have but the consent and connivance of a few weak persons, is a Devilish Lye, as thousands can witness; to say, it is a true state, or the Case being truly thus, as we are able to make it good, Is a Lye, if possible, more than damnable.

To suggest again, that he is able to make good a loose kind of way amongst them, more intolerable than those they descend from, is a wicked and base reflection, and indeed a downright lie.

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*Pag. 7.* To hear some Ministers of the Church of *England*, is not to the dishonour of God, discommodious to the Souls of Men here, nor hazardous of their Salvation hereafter.

*Page 11.* How shall we believe our Nonconformists have such a reverence for those good men that are dead— when they disdain and reject those now alive that are under the same circumstances.

*Pag. 14.* We do say, though the Nonconformists may be honest and well-meaning People, yet, for the most part of them, they are far below some Ministers afore-mentioned, both for Learning, Parts, Prudence, Policy, yea, and Piety too.

*Pag. 17.* To say, there is greater Learning amongst them than the generality of others.

*Pag. 18.* Take two or three Mechanicks in a Town, and put to these so many Priests and Jesuits to dispute, and what fearful basting work will they make with these poor Mechanicks or Lay-Preachers.

Once to suppose, that the Nonconformists in general do hold, is a dishonour to God, discommodious to the Souls of Men here, and hazardous of their Salvation hereafter, to hear good Ministers of the Church of *England*, is most weak and devilish.

To declare, that the Nonconformists do disdain and reject the good Ministers of the Church of *England*, now alive, is a vile slander unjustly cast upon them.

To say, though they are well-meaning People, yet they are far below some Ministers of the Church of *England*, is monstrous foolish, for so are the most part of the People of the Conformists below some Ministers of the Nonconformists, for Learning, Parts, Prudence, and Policy too. At what a learned rate doth this wicked Scribler argue.

To say, there is greater Learning with the Church-Ministers, than with others, is a base and unworthy Comparison; it being well known, there are learned and worthy Men amongst the Nonconformists, as most are in the World.

To put Lay-Preachers to dispute with Priests and Jesuits, when there are Men learned and able to match them besides these, and then to suppose the victory on the Papist-side, is base and disingenuous.

Page 19. 1. For their Institution and Ordination, they have, 1. Persons of ripe Age, great Learning, and much Experience, to come before, who have Power and Parts to examine and try their fitness. 2. They have afterwards Congregations to preach before, for the approbation or dislike; and if they shall be found fit to pass an induction, then there is a comfortable support and maintenance for them, to encourage and carry them on in their Work. Now of this useful Order, there is in a manner a total vacancy amongst the Nonconformists—No Maintenance for them, in case found fit—The Poor better provided for under the Ministers of the *Church of England*, than elsewhere.

Page 20. The Nonconformists in their carriage, are very surly and dogged, sour and morose.

Page 21. The Doctrine of many Nonconformists hath been to set out God to be a vehement, rigid and severe Being, ready to take advantage, nay, to make them, rather than fail, instancing the *Epist. of Jude*, that some are made to be taken and destroyed, and that *Esau*, with the generality of others, were hated by him that made them, without respect to any cause on their parts, intimating the unmercifulness of God to the most part of Mankind, making of

To condemn the Party, for shortness in a few, in respect of the Ministers and the Poor, is horrible Injustice; To say, there is a total vacancy of any useful Order amongst the Nonconformists, in respect of Proof, Tryal, Ordination, and Maintenance, is so grand a Lye, that the Devil himself cannot have confidence enough to aver it.

To say, they are in their common carriage, surly, dogged, sour, and morose, is so grand a lye, that thousands and ten thousands can amass against it.

To charge an ill chain of Doctrines and Principles upon a Party, when not one in a thousand do hold the same, is a kind of Justice and Charity that comes from Hell.

are all as dead (whilst we are a  
live), as a Stock, or a Stone, or  
as a Mechanick had it lately in  
his Pulpit, as dead as a Corps,  
that lyes by the Walls in a Coffin,  
ready for buriall; That there  
is no necessity for obedience to  
please God, or work out our own  
Salvation. Nay, as one Mr. B.  
phrased it, not long since in a  
Pulpit, It is Devilish, yea, Witch  
craft and Sorcery, for any to  
preach up doing for the obtain-  
ing Life and Salvation; and that  
love to God himself is not ne-  
cessary to a man's being saved.

Page 24. I do profess, since I have allowed my self a little liberty to hear the Ministers aforesaid, I have been greatly ashamed to think how ill I have spent my time, as in under the preaching of sinners, weak Souls of the other side, and am not at all pleased with them, well-meaning People who expose themselves for suffering for ill-works, in search of

the *Pagani*. But by this means they may come to see by an easy rule of comparison, that wealth, nobility, and insignificance of title, that they formerly had in *Italy*, and admired, together with the great worth and value, that is in the other, whom they before slighted, and esteemed as the Sons of *Beelzebub*, the Merchants of *Babylon*, or, at best, but the broken Army of *Magog*; the sight and understanding of which

When one man shall preach a groundless Notion or Doctrine and a Party shall be abused for it, it is very hardly less than damnable; many thousands do hold noble Principles that have not affinity with a wronging God, Man, or the Gospel.

To spend time in sitting under  
pitious weak Soule, is better than  
to spend it in damnable lyes and  
flanders against good men.

To set forth the Nonconformist losing light by Church Ministers, esteeming of them Sons of *Bohemia*, Merchants of *Perdition*, or broken Articles of *Albion*, is highly devilish, full of poison, and calls for great damnation; to affirm, that the generalist of the Nonconformist Preachers are weak, shallow, illiterate and inconsiderate Men, is a damnable lye, for they are generally sober and thinking

(I doubt not) be an effectual means to cure them of that distemper, which, for the extravagancy of it, may be called a Vertigo or Ca- lenture.

Fig. 26. If the Nation should be influenced by such men (as the flocking to them, and leaving the other tends thereunto) then down goes our Schools of Learning, the famous Universities, and not only so, but down goes our Churches and Publick Meeting-places, which are the best conveniences for solemnizing of Gods Publick Worship. As I knew a *mechanic Brother* once, that wished, that all the Parish Churches in England were of one indure body, and that he was able with a Cable to draw them into the Sea, he would do it, tho he perished with them. And this not all neither, but down goes the Ministers Maintenance. I might enlarge here, but I spare the weak.

Fig. 28. They tolerate men incapable of the former, and very defective in the latter, such whose learning never made them capable of reading with a distinct and proper pronunciation. They slight, undervalue, and reject men of the best parts and learning in the Land, as might be made appear, not only by the surly carriages they shew towards them, but by shunning their company, and at all times refusing to hear them.

men: to call them *Heretics*, with such blaining and poisonous breath, is the Serpent, and worse than a Dog.

To bring in one person that might be mad and mislead, an Enemy to Parish Churches and desire their downfall, and to lodge this at the doors of the Party. It makes the Author a grand Devil. That passage I might enlarge here, but I spare the weak. I say, that they deny Learning, trample upon Tradition, and beat down Reason, is so grand a lye, that the Author can never stand under it, when God comes to judge for it.

1. They deny Learning. 2. They trample Tradition. 3. Reason itself; this noble and renowned Soul falls under the same misfortune, with its good old Friend and Neighbour Tradition. Oh! what Clamours have we raised against it, calling of it carnal Reason, corrupted Reason, blind Guide, and what not, and blows struck ready to break the Pulpit, that they may trample it down sufficiently.

That they tolerate Men incapable of Tradition, and defective in Reason, slight and reject men of the best parts and learning in the Land, and shew it by such carriages, and shunning their company at all times, refusing to hear them.

This is so notorious and foul a slander, that declares the Author to be a blind and belovted Devil.



—To set aside more private disorders, we have them that are open to the sight of the Sun; viz. forty distinct Sects, some lay twenty at least.—

Page 29, 30. That such do most abound and we are most certain to have them in the Ministry of the Church of England; for the clearing of this, the experience of many years tells us, that out of the Ministry of the Church of England, we have had Men fit to Preach before great and mighty Princes, the high Courts of Parliament, the grave and reverend Judges of the Realm, the Magistrates and Courts of Aldermen in great Cities and Corporations; yea, their Learning and Educa-

tion hath been such, as hath rendred them fit to be Counsellors of State, to give Advice to Princes, to go Ambassadors upon grand Messages (for their Countrey's good) into Foreign Parts: But where have any arose out of the Mechanic Preachers of the Nonconformists? And is not this for the honour of a Nation, where Science shall flourish, that a sort or rank of men, which commonly is below the Gentry, in point of descent, should, by Learning and good Education, become able to deliver God's Messages to their Princes and Rulers, and their Princes Ambassadors to Foreign States; and would not all this be lost, if the Nation should be suffered to lose its Learning, and to be immerged into dull and clownish Illiteracy?

There will be a freedom from a needless charge, in contributing to the maintenance of weak and silly Men, who carelessly leave either their civil Callings, (and expose their Families to ruin and decay, and to depend upon others to be provided for) under a pretence of being called to Preach, when God knows they do not understand their A, B, C, in Religion, can hardly speak common sense, and are so far from being able to convince critical Gainayers, as that they know not how to teach the Ignorant, or to form one right intelligible Notion of Points fundamental, nay, such they are, as often preach Nonsense, Confusion, and sometimes Blasphemy.

To number up the Sects to twenty or forty, carries a secret malice in it, that must be accounted for.

It is suggested, as if the learning of the Nation, and mens being made useful thereby, was in danger of being lost, if the Noncons should prosper; That many Preachers leave their Callings and Families, under pretence of being called to preach, that understand not their A, B, C, can hardly speak common Sense, that often preach Nonsense, Confusion, and sometimes Blasphemy, that have not an habit of Knowledge, nor Books, nor allow themselves time to study.

*A further Account of the sad State of Mr. John Child, as it was written with his own Hand, being found in his house after his death, and delivered by his Wife to Mr. H. C. take as followeth.*

*Pride, Folly, Madneß, Villany, and great wickedneß retraced.*

**T**HAT Satan may fill the hearts of men as to make them forget God, grieve his good Spirit, sin against Christ, offer horrible violence to the light of Grace, the sacred Law of their Maker, and the rational powers of their own Souls, as well as cause grief and piercing sorrow to the hearts of their dear Brethren, is not only verified and confirmed by variety of bad Examples, and instances both from Scripture and History, but hath also appeared notorious and evident in a late unparallel'd instance of one who hath been a Professor of the Christian Religion, and that after the most strictest manner of these latter times for many years, viz. The Author of the *Second Argument*; who forgetting God and the great Obligation he stood in to Him and to all Mankind, especially the good and best part thereof, did suffer himself so far to be acted by a diabolical influence; and the ministry of Darkness, as not only to desert those persons which he did believe and knew to be God's Jewels, (choicest and good) but with a hard heart, and bold, impudent, and steeld forehead, a most poysonous breath, and viperous tongue, did set forth, to the great dishonour of God, and the unspeakable grief of multitudes of good and pious Souls, a prophane and scandalous Libel, under pretence of perswading to Peace and Unity; where, as the chiefest design of it was to advance his Pride, to vent his Spite, and maliciously to spit forth the very Fire of Hell against some, yea against many that he had taken offence at: which with shame and great confusion he desires to confesse both to God and Man, and especially to such as knew him, and were sorely grieved and offended by him.

1. He confesses his great pride, foolishness, and presumption, in daring so much as to offer at a Method to Unite such different Parties, with whose Wisdom, Parts, and Learning, he had no-  
thing

thing to compare; for which he is bowed down, and asketh pardon.

2. In giving the least touch, glance, or intimation, as tho' God's Ordinance of the Holy Supper, were so low and indifferent a thing, as might be made use of to answer a carnal end, or secular design.

3. That he should render men odious to the Nation, as being Enemies to the Ministry and their maintenance, and the provision made by Law for the poor; for this he accuseth himself of being injurious, and prays for pardon.

4. That he should basely reflect upon mens Callings, in a way of lightness and disdain; he thinks it great madness and folly, and begs pardon both of God and man for it.

5. That he should so boldly and presumptuously pry into the Decrees of God, and so abusively set forth the consequences of mens Opinions about them, in such horrid, harsh, and unsuitable Language, charging the Authors of those Opinions with the highest strain of Murder, even of God himself, he is unfeignedly sorry, and begs pardon. And that he should render the Body of the Nonconformists weak, foolish, and contemptible to their Enemies, he thinks were great wickedness, and that he should call them a villanous Body of men; he confesseth with a bleeding heart, so high a strain and degree of wickedness in it, that is like blaspheming Gods Tabernacle, and them that dwell therein; for which he is sorry a thousand fold, and begs the pardon of God and all good men. That he should give occasion of stumbling to any, whereby he may be guilty of their blood, at the thoughts of which he trembles, and begs pardon with his whole Soul. That he should speak against his Brother, and slander his Mothers Son; making the hearts of the Righteous sad, that God would not have made sad, and pain and grieve all that were acquainted with him; this he confesses to be a sin of a deep dye, and his heart is ready to rend asunder for it, and with an agony begs pardon of God and all good men. That he should bring such shame and confusion upon himself, as to exclude him the comfortable society of good people, and render him both afraid and ashamed to do his duty in visiting those that are under affliction; for these great wickednesses and damnable villanies, and any other that may be contained in that detestable and accursed Pamphlet aforesaid, which for want of the sight of, I cannot enumerate. I confess my self a monstrous Wretch, a great Transgressor, an horrible Actor of wickedness.

kindness, a Gratifier of the wicked and worst of men; a prime Enemy to many goodly people, a Promoter of the Devils designs, a great Provoker of God and his Son, an Enemy to my self, a Procurer of the ruine of my Family; for which I pray that my Soul may escape the damnation of Hell. *Amen and Amen, O God.*

*Another Paper written as a Postscript to the former, by Mr. John Child's own hand; a Copy whereof take as followeth.*

**H**AVING just with the vile and accursed Book called the *Second Argument*, and the Author being filled with horror and astonishing confusion, at the perusal of it, could not well transcribe the first Paper, and put things into an orderly method; therefore thought fit to write this by way of Postscript.

*First*, He thanks God that he is not yet in Hell, lamenting his folly, wickedness, and violence with Cain, Beelzebub, and Judas; but has a little time to leave this Account of things, in respect of this first design and progress of the illcontrived, infamous, reproachful, and scandalous Libel.

*Second*, That the very beginning in these words, *It is hath been our endeavour to correct*, &c. is devilishly proud and insulting; and parts the sight of their folly in being debarred of their Civil Rights, for groundless scrupulosity in Religion; this is bold fancy, and uncharitable.

*Third*, The 2d page, and part of the 3d, is a silly trifling Presumption.

*4th*, The 4th page, the suggesting anything of an undervaluing nature, touching the Holy Sacrament, being a civil thing, of a dangerous tendency.

*Declaring*, in page 5, the greatest number of Nonconformists to hold Principles dangerously Heretical, and abominably abusive of the blessed God.

*That* he confesseth not only to be a rash, injurious, and uncharitable; but a devilish, spiteful, and malicious Slander; to be not only hard Measure, but selfish Cruelty and Injustice; to stretch the consequences of mens Principles, beyond the force of their minds, and then charge wickedness upon them; against Justice, Mercy, and all good Nature; to impute such ill things to the main Body or greatest number of them, that is contained in the two following pages; as it is bold and desperate to report the

matter, so it is most horrible Injustice, and malicious Envy, to fix the Crime, to declare them upon a wicked foundation to be no true Church, to pronounce them a *Villanous Body of People*, to be bloody Murderers of God their Maker in the attributes of his Wisdom, Holiness, and Goodness, to proclaim them Monsters, to be giddy and foolish, to want Wit and

Policy, is such a venomous Language, that Hell could not exceed. Being in very deed horribly wicked, abominable, and devilish; justly deserving damnation, and for which the Author doubts he shall hardly escape. And page 13. to represent them Enemies to the Bishops and Clergy, Underminers of the Schools and Learning, and against the Law for the Maintenance of the Poor, was spiteful, devilish, and malicious and had a tendency to stir up Rage and Persecution; for which a deep Repentance is required. To mention mens Callings in a way of lightness and contempt, to expose them to Hate and Derision, was highly base, devilish, and full of poyson. Publickly to discover Nakedness, tho' matters of fact were true, is against all good Nature, and a very great piece of prophaneity. To reflect upon them as Deniers of the Faith, and worse than Infidels, not fit to be trusted with a National Church, nor to be a true Church themselves, is a condemning to so high degree, and carries so much of the rank poyson and venom of the Devil, the Accuser of the Brethren, in it, that renders forgiveness of the Crime much doubted of: for all the base Reflections, Slanders, and most astonishing Accusations and Censures, I beg Pardon of all good men, and their Prayers to God, that I may obtain Pardon and Forgiveness at his Hand.

*Now if a sound and true Notion of God be the first and foundation Principle of Religion, and consequently of a true Church, then such as have it not, but the manifest and direct contrary, can be no true Church, because upon a wicked and false foundation. Such I am sure there are among the Sectaries: and if such a Villanous Body of People be the best and true Church, that even in their first and main Principle thus bloodily murder their Maker in his most admirable Attributes of Wisdom, Holiness, and Goodness; I do wonder in my mind what kind of People the World is.*

And thus to expose their pride and contempt, to expose them to Hate and Derision, was highly base, devilish, and full of poyson. Publickly to discover Nakedness, tho' matters of fact were true, is against all good Nature, and a very great piece of prophaneity. To reflect upon them as Deniers of the Faith, and worse than Infidels, not fit to be trusted with a National Church, nor to be a true Church themselves, is a condemning to so high degree, and carries so much of the rank poyson and venom of the Devil, the Accuser of the Brethren, in it, that renders forgiveness of the Crime much doubted of: for all the base Reflections, Slanders, and most astonishing Accusations and Censures, I beg Pardon of all good men, and their Prayers to God, that I may obtain Pardon and Forgiveness at his Hand.



# POSTSCRIPT.

**T**HE NARRATIVE was prepar'd for the Press soon after the Death of Mr. Child, but the Secrecy of the Times were such, that no Printer would undertake it; nor durst the Compiler appear to own it; nor that the Matter of Fact, in any respect, wanted of truth, or the Language harsh and reflecting on the Church of England; we hope we may, without vanity, say, that it is written with a Temper suitable to the Profession we have always made of Love and Charity to those that differ from us, and though the State of Affairs in this Nation be since changed, through the Goodness of God, and the gracious Favour of his Majesty towards us, we persevere in all our Designs, to show the same Spirit and Temper towards all Christians, of what Persuasion soever, and we would by no means have this Construction pass upon the Publication of this Narrative at this time, as if we design'd to make the Church of England odious, by representing the Memory of so dreadful an Accident, which was the natural effect of some of their Persecutions: God is our Witness, our whole Design being only to Arraign the Practices of Persecution as ill, without reflecting on any who have been the Instruments, hoping Time, and this Glorious Design of his Majesty's, will have such an happy issue, as to put all that profess to be the Followers of Christ, into such a condition, as to see it as their Interest, as well as their Duty, not to Contend for Persecution, and if our Passions be cool'd by wanting Power to do Mischief, the thing us self, viz. the Doctrine of Persecution, may be safer against us in the consciousness of it.

We had a Design to have Publish'd something in this Postscript, tending to a Happy Union and Love among all Christians, which is also intimated in the beginning of the Narrative, but the passion of some Men's Zeal, which sets their Passions on fire, will render a Discourse of this Nature, of little use, they contending to preserve the Instruments of our Ruine, and we the removal of them;

and we believe all thinking Men will agree with us, that we have ground for this Apprehension : All we shall say to it, at present, is, that we hope our Actions shall constantly witness to the truth of this, that we design nothing, but to be in a capacity of living quietly by our Neighbours, and shewing how much we love and value those that differ from us, by forgetting Injuries, and striving who shall shew most of the Spirit of the blessed Jesus, which consists in Meekness, Forgiveness, and Forbearance.

That which we shall add, with respect to the Narrative itself, is this, That it's a true and dreadful Instance of a Man fear'd into Conformity, by the Severity he saw on others, and in part felt himself; that the Temptation met with his Corruptions; (which, if his own charge on himself be not too severe) you see verified by his own Papers; yet that excuseth not the Doctrine and Practice of Persecution; if so many might wash his hands also of the Sins of Men, and though some Men may know the beginnings of Sin, yet none know the bounds of it: so, after his Conformity, he drew his Pen, and dip't it in Gall against his Brethren, going on to do violence to his Conscience, till God in a dreadful manner awaken'd it against himself, so as prov'd terrible to all the beholders, as well as to himself, the Particulars whereof shall not be repeated: we account it a loud Voice against Persecution, and durst not silence it, lest we should betray this Witness of God against it: we know Authorities of Scripture and Reason are best to work upon the Judgment, to convince the World of the error of doing that so a-broad, that would not they should do to them: but a Fact of this Nature may move the Affections, and corroborate that Light that Men receive from thence; and for this end it was at first intended to be published. It's a dreadful thing, not only to break in upon the Civil Rights of Men, on account of Religion, but far more so to be instruments to put any upon such ways, which not only endanger their Peace of Conscience here, but their Eternal Welfare hereafter; and this kind we are now to charge Persecution with, and have evidence enough for it in this very Instance.

The Discourse of the Nature and Office of Conscience, that you find in the beginning of the Narrative, was written by a worthy Brother of ours, for Private Satisfaction, which we have presumed to publish, we humbly conceiving it to be for Publick Good; and that the Conclusions that we think are Natural from the foregoing Narrative, are these.

Full

THEY THAT ARE WE should be careful of hiding Delinquencies in their Consciences; for if it may come a Storm Wind, that may shake the Rocks: However some Men may not taste that severity this Man did, but go to the Grave with their Bones full of Marrow: yet it's certainly the Duty and Interest of every Man, to take diligent heed to keep a Conscience void of offence towards God and Man, that they may escape that Shipwreck that this Man, and other Inhabitants of the World of the like nature, have met with. God sometimes makes some Men Pillars of Salt, that the secure World may be awakened, and that Decent and Probant Persons may tremble at the living Influence of the Sovereignty of the Divine Majesty, in and over the Consciences of Men, which they would outbrave or deny the Almighty God can create a Hell on this side Hell in the Consciences of Men, the Foe of which, neither the Artifice of Man, nor Law, nor the Application of the Promises of the Gospel, (though the strict Mediums) can extinguish. An Instance of this you have in what the Friends of this Man did, who with great tenderness endeavour'd to do all they could in this kind, but without success, and, as is apparent in the precedent Narrative, they had not the humors of a Man under Natural Melancholy to deal with, but a Man purely under the dreadful Terrors of a guilty and an ungodly Conscience; a Man of so sound and strong a Constitution of Body, that all that knew him, even to the last, could and did easily discern his Disease was purely Spiritual.

Secondly, We consider, at this time of day at least, it may put our Country-men, who have hitherto been of a contrary Opinion, to a serious thought, whether this Persecution of God's Children attended with such dreadful Instances of this Nature, may not be much more useful than the most useful at this time, because the Eyes of the whole Nation are now turned that way: We are at work about these Instruments, we mean the Persecutions, which have made such havoc on the Substantive Persons and Estates of Men; and on the Consciences of many others; and yet, by the goodness of God, have not felt the Dreadful Effects this Man did; and so may be thinking we are safe.

And herein all, since his Gracious Majesty, by the goodness of God, hath published His Royal Declaration, for Liberty of Conscience, and upon such Grounds and Reasons, as we conceive are unanswerable, outdoing all Kings and Princes, not only in the East of his Clemency, but in the Reason of it; and as it is that that will be in the immortal Honour, so we hope, that it will bring this Persecution by Law, that may for ever deliver this Nation from the Convulsions and Evils it has labour'd under in former

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# PREFACE

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